

SECRET

25 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: CINCUNC/CINUSFK Message of 24 July on "Situation in Korea as of Mid-July 1967"

1. We have been concerned for some time about North Korean military and subversive activity in South Korea and agree with General Bonesteel's recommendation that a National Intelligence Estimate be prepared on this subject. With your approval, we shall set an NIE on this subject in train, aiming at a UNIB target date early in September.
2. We offer the following comments on the substance of General Bonesteel's message: We are just as impressed as General Bonesteel with the dimensions of the recent North Korean activity. But we do not entirely agree on the question of North Korean intentions. CINCUNC's interpretation in this regard is oversimplified in our view. The North Koreans certainly appear to wish to test ROK military defenses along the DMZ and to test the ROK sea for the Communist "fish." They probably see their actions too as: (a) a contribution to Hanoi's war; (b) a distraction and excuse for poor economic performance within their own borders; and (c) a contribution to ROK political instability.
3. Pyongyang's new course of action, in our judgment, is an admission that "peaceful" means of taking over the South no longer offer reasonable hope of success. Herein lies the danger, of course. From now on, one must expect the worst from the North. They will do what they think they can get away with. It is indeed a time of testing, as CINCUNC indicates.
4. We agree that the North Korean activity will increase ROK reluctance to ship more troops to Vietnam. But so long as US forces in Korea remain at strength and so long as the proper financial inducements are offered, we believe that the ROKs would send more troops. Action, however, would probably be delayed until at least September or October when the opposition party returns to its National Assembly seats, as we think it will.

SHERMAN KENT

Director
National Estimates

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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